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Duxbury Clipper

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

By Ellen Leahy

To the Beach

The fact that spring has sprung, yet it isn't exactly in the air, is no reason for alarm. Take my visits to the beach this past month, I needed adventure, not the kind that required searching for airfares and all that planning, rather I needed to change my surroundings — now. That little nor'easter had transformed the look of our beach. I actually thought while winding along King Caesar Road towards the bridge that maybe I'd stumble upon a seal. The fact that I had never before spotted a seal while at the big beach was not an issue. It was the first gloriously sunny March Friday where the temperature might have hit 60. I meandered on foot along the big beach toward the Gurnet, spying a myriad of lobster pots in disarray, fragmented beach fence, the many oddly colored crab claws, giant lavender mussel shells, and dozens upon

to be a large rock along the bay side move slightly. All thoughts of star fish in the distant past, I jumped out for a closer look and it was like a mirage - one moment still and then, the teeniest of movements. As I ventured down to the water's edge, a snowy owl took flight. It was magnificent and startling all in one.

Let me share one more recent trek with you. Spring had officially sprung,



With the rough surf and sun peaking from behind the clouds this seal took a rest on Duxbury Beach late Saturday afternoon.

dozens of starfish, when suddenly there appeared a rather large bone. I felt like one of the four boys in the Spielberg movie *Stand by Me* who went in search of a rumored dead bodymy mind fast-forwarded to the point when the boys did actually stumble upon this so-called treasure and the actual horror that reality can sometimes bring.

Suddenly, another bone appeared and all thoughts of seals were gone. I was on a full-blown skeleton hunt. I found six bones in all that day ; one T-bone, one chicken bone, and four big fish bones, which were identified for me by the Winsor House Chef, Paul Wahlberg and rather quickly I might add.

Any swamp Yankee would immediately identify my treasure as stuff thrown off a fishing boat - but for me, a awash ashore, (like the aforementioned bones) , it was as if I was lost in the pages of one of Duxbury detective novels such as *The Body at the Bug* (available at Westwinds).

When next I ventured down to the big beach to collect some of those starfish I had seen, I was hijacked on the beach road and taken out to tour the Gurnet Light with some members of the beach preservation society and their tour guide. If you haven, been to the Gurnet, pencil in Memorial Day weekend when the bay officially opens and the only lighthouse that was ever hit by a cannonball will be open for guided tours.

As if being out on this point in this historic structure wasn't adventure enough, on the way back we saw what appeared

but where? It was dank. I was dragging myself down to the beach looking for some sort of relief, a hint of Coppertone in the air perhaps? I was nearing the handicapped ramp on the big beach side while walking on scattered rocks lost in the foam and left behind when to my right near the dune I spied a seal. The slightly spotted creature was luxuriating in the sand, while rubbing his (or her) nose on some of the fence wire that was now stakeless. I sat with this creature for quite awhile, a safe distance away as to not freak either of us out. The swamp Yankees refer to these creatures as sea doggies, and I know why with those puppy eyes imploring me like my dog, Grace, will often do. This seal would scratch its chin with the claws on the front flippers which looked pretty vicious to me at the time. My memory of a seal is more of those sleek creatures in the zoo or were they from cartoons? Another beachcomber told me that the seals will sometimes beach themselves for a rest. Looking out at the whipped up green sea I could understand why.

So, what's the point? Don't wait for that perfect beach day, get off the couch and let mother nature do the rest - and if you are not a water baby, try the town forest. We live in an old growth forest by the sea.

This is the stuff vacation dreams are made of, so why not take a break from that busy schedule for a little small town adventure.